

The Potential Nuclear Consequences of the Rise of Hindu Nationalism in India

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INT 498-01

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COSA Submission

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Introduction:

The emergence of current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has brought upon the rise of Hindu nationalism within India. The rise of the Hindu nationalist movement has made the minorities living within India and the Islamic states surrounding it, extremely uncomfortable. Narendra Modi's career catapulted into the limelight when he became the Prime Minister of India in 2014, with promises of bringing economic prosperity to the state, but doing it with his flair. Prime Minister Modi, who is a longtime member of the Hindu nationalist group, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), has consistently been guided by the RSS throughout his reign over India.¹ Along with Prime Minister Modi, the majority of the BJP members also belong to this group and continue to believe in the idea of transforming India into a Hindu state. This new and momentous ideology has caught the eye of the international community, who have begun to call this nationalistic ideology 'the saffronisation of India.'² With Prime Minister Modi and the BJP in power, the saffronisation of India could allow to India to revert to its ancient Hindu ways.³ This new wave of politics has been harsh and has caught the attention of India's long-standing, neighboring adversary, Pakistan.

The relationship that India and Pakistan share has been a tumultuous one, ever since the British departed the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The departure of the British split the subcontinent into two regional powers, India and Pakistan, and this phenomenon became known

1 Lauren Frayer and Furkan Latif Khan, "The Powerful Group Shaping The Rise Of Hindu Nationalism In India," NPR (NPR, May 3, 2019), <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/03/706808616/the-powerful-group-shaping-the-rise-of-hindu-nationalism-in-india>.

2 Bhatia, Aditi. "The 'Saffronisation' of India and Contemporary Political Ideology." *World Englishes* 39, no. 4 (2020): 568–80.

3 Ibid.

as the Partition. The India-Pakistan Partition of 1947 caused the largest mass migration of human beings in the history of the world. With 14 million people becoming refugees and two million being killed during this horrifying process, India became a secular state with a Hindu majority population while Pakistan became an Islamic state, with a predominantly Muslim population.⁴ The disputes caused by religious differences between these two, newly independent states, plummeted into the international scene, causing all states to constantly watch the actions of these two adversaries. It is no secret that since becoming independent states, India and Pakistan have faced off against each other on countless occasions and have been the only two states in the history of the world to go to war while having an extensive nuclear arsenal. The potential activation of nuclear weapons by any one of these states has kept the world on its tiptoes, anxiously waiting to see what event could cause the initiation of a nuclear war in the Indian subcontinent. Throughout this paper, I am to answer this trivia question: how could the rise of Hindu nationalism in India cause India to potentially unload its nuclear arsenal towards Pakistan?

The structure of this paper will begin with an examination of the extensive amount of literature present on the India and Pakistan conflict and the recent rise of Hindu nationalism in India. By doing so, I can bridge the gaps that are present in the current literature with the help of my findings. Second, with the help of all the literature and research that has been published, I will look to provide an explanation to my research question and do so with potential causal mechanisms that align with the current trends present within the Indian government. Third, I will provide a historical analysis of the Kashmiri conflict and why it continues to be the primary source of friction in the India and Pakistan relationship. To conclude my paper, I choose to focus

⁴ C. Ryan Perkins and Guneeta Singh Bhalla, "1947 Partition of India & Pakistan," June 12, 2017, <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/1947-partition/about/1947-partition-of-india-pakistan>.

on the broader implications that could result from a nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan and how the added factor of religious nationalism could potentially influence other states around the world to justify their warring mindset. The use of this paper will be to add to the previous literature present on the India and Pakistan conflict, but with a view that has yet to be fully explored.

Literature Review:

The India and Pakistan conflict has been awarded an immense amount of attention from the media and scholars due to the uncertainty attached to the region. At the moment, the relationship between India and Pakistan is charged and has caught the attention of people from all around. The Indo-Pakistani relationship has been closely watched by the international community for over seventy years now, and scholars from all over the world have tried to determine ways to aid this complicated situation. In this section of the paper, the aim will be to highlight the authors who have come to understand the Indo-Pakistani dispute and how their explanations have helped influence my work. Understanding the literature that has previously been researched and developed is the first step in identifying the conflict between India and Pakistan and its chances of turning nuclear.

To begin the review of the literature, the first step would be to understand one of the most prolific theories that help explain India and Pakistan's relationship regarding their nuclear arsenal. S. Paul Kapur argues that the stability/instability paradox, which is commonly applied to many potential nuclear conflicts, does not explain the continuing conflict in nuclearized South Asia. This is a bold argument since Kapur states that "a small probability of lower-level conflict escalating to the nuclear threshold would not encourage such behavior" between India and

Pakistan.⁵ The likelihood of nuclear weapons being used in this tumultuous zone is necessary to understand since it helps clarify the situations that could potentially activate nuclear warfare by both India and Pakistan.

Similarly, in the article “India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: Unpacking the Dynamics of a South Asian Frozen Conflict,” Ganguly explain how the intricate relationship between India and Pakistan is a frozen conflict and how the transformation of this conflict could be divided up into three different subsets: peaceful thawing, violent thawing, and conflict withering.⁶ Each one of these different transformational conflict dynamics was unlikely to result in peace in the area since domestic Indian politics is to opposed the thawing in the Kashmir region. This article fits in incredibly well since it expands into the Kashmiri conflict that serves as a root cause for many of the issues between India and Pakistan. This article offers excellent insight into the religious conflicts that make this region so incredibly vulnerable, therefore allowing for the potential of nuclear weapon usage.

The next focus would be to understand the Hindu nationalistic tendencies of India and how they have become escalated since the emergence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The paper by Aditi Bhatia details the acts of ‘saffronisation’ and how it has become an increasingly popular ideology within the Indian political stratosphere.⁷ Saffronisation is a political neologism that seeks to revert India to its ancient Hindu ways, therefore forcing a religious ideology on the citizens of a secular state. Understanding the aspects of Indian politics seeks to contribute to the rise of Hindu nationalism

5 S. Paul Kapur. "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia Is Not like Cold War Europe." *International Security* 30, no. 2 (2005): 129.

6 Ganguly, Sumit, Michal Smetana, Sannia Abdullah, and Ales Karmazin. "India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: Unpacking the Dynamics of a South Asian Frozen Conflict." *Asia Europe Journal* 17, no. 1 (2018): 129–43.

7 Aditi Bhatia, "The 'Saffronisation' of India and Contemporary Political Ideology," *World Englishes* 39, no. 4 (2020): pp. 568-580.

in India and how its effects continued to terrify the religious minorities settled within it and the Islamic states surrounding it.

In the paper “Hindu Nationalism and the Foreign Policy of India’s Bharatiya Janata Party,” Ganguly chooses to focus on how religious nationalism emerged into Indian politics and how it has deeply transformed the foreign policy of the BJP. This article is an essential part of my research since that tackles the subject of Hindu nationalism and how the rise of this religious practice is challenging India's stance on being a secular state.⁸ This paper is so poignant and effective with its approach since it gives the reader an inside look into the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's view on India's foreign policy when it comes to Pakistan

The last aspect to focus on deals with the shifting nature of India's nuclear policies. Christopher Clary and Vipin Narang do an excellent job explaining the changing nature of India's nuclear policy from a No-First-Use (NPU) to one that follows a more circumstantial approach.⁹ The need to deeply analyze this change is crucial due to the recent implementation of new territorial laws by India in Kashmir that has deeply upset the Pakistani leadership. The usage of nuclear weapons could potentially occur if the changes in India's nuclear policy keep occurring and that could potentially make this decades-long conflict go nuclear.

Additionally, the article “The Changing Contours of Minimum Deterrence in South Asia,” tackles the complex and unclear nuclear policies of both India and Pakistan. In this article, Khan explains that due to the instability and uncertainty present in the Indian subcontinent, the minimum deterrence policy agreed upon by both India and Pakistan has the possibility of

8 Ganguly, Sumit. “Hindu Nationalism and the Foreign Policy of India’s Bharatiya Janata Party.” *Transatlantic Academy Paper Series*, 2015, 1–15.

9 Christopher Clary and Vipin Narang, “India’s Counterforce Temptations: Strategic Dilemmas, Doctrine, and Capabilities,” *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Winter 2018/19), pp. 7–52.

transforming.¹⁰ Unlike the Clary and Narang paper, Khan chooses to focus on both India and Pakistan's potential need to opt out of the minimum deterrence policy and change their nuclear policy into something rather aggressive and dangerous. The addition of this article builds upon my rhetoric of the shifting nature of India's nuclear policy towards Pakistan.

Analyzing articles that follow these themes is crucial to answering the research question on hand — how the rise of Hindu nationalism results in the use of nuclear weapons between India and Pakistan? While each of the articles provides excellent insight on their approach to understanding the Indo-Pakistani conflict, they are still unable to use nationalism as the approach to explain the threat of nuclear weapons being used in this area. By combining aspects of all three of these themes, I could provide the answer that could explain how Hindu nationalism could cause India and Pakistan to use nuclear weapons towards each other.

Research Design and Causal Mechanisms:

To understand the path this paper chooses to follow, understanding the design of its work is crucial. Much of the work highlighted within this paper is exploring historical data. An insight into the Kashmiri conflict will begin the research. Exploring this part of the India and Pakistan relationship is essential since it explains the way the unrest has grown throughout the last seventy years in the Indian subcontinent. This approach has many strengths and limitations attached to it. The amount of literature that is attached to this conflict played in my favor since it allowed me to understand how the tensions between India and Pakistan have escalated. Papers by prolific authors such as Sumit Ganguly and Robert Powell allowed for my research to be extremely credible. The limitations surrounding the Kashmiri conflict dealt with the lack of interviews from local Kashmiri citizens. Understanding their struggles firsthand would have

¹⁰ Zafar Khan. "The Changing Contours of Minimum Deterrence in South Asia." *Policy Perspectives* 13, no. 1 (2016): 77-96.

added an immense amount of intel to my paper. The opinions of the Kashmiri citizens who have lived in India and have experienced the changes that BJP and Prime Minister Modi have implemented would contribute to the public opinion aspect of my paper.

The next focus of my research reflects the public opinion of Indians living within India. This is yet another extremely important step of my design since it tackles the way the Hindu population views Pakistan and its nuclear capabilities. The employment of interviews from Indian politicians and retired military generals served to my advantage, but also helped me understand the dynamic of the Indo-Pakistani relationship much more. Along with gathering the opinions of key figures in the Indian political realm, the exploration of the historical use of public opinion in India also served to further my research. Taking India's former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's nuclear proliferation tactics into account helped me grasp the ways the Indian government has historically used public opinion to further its rhetoric.

The last focus of my research deals with the Indian media. Tackling the one-sided, BJP-backed nature of the Indian media served as the most difficult challenge throughout my work on this paper. After watching countless Hindi news channels, it became evident that the Indian media's ultimate goal has been to serve as BJP's propaganda machine. This helps explain the rise of Hindu nationalism in India and also served as one of the key sources of evidence throughout my paper. The one-sided nature of the Indian media also served as a limitation since there was no comparable story from any countering Indian news broadcasters. The competition had simply been removed from having an opinion. This was reflected by India's World Freedom Press ranking, which declined to 140 out of the 180 countries in the world, largely due to the emergence of the BJP in recent years.¹¹

11 Ishfaq, Sarmad. 2020. "Coercion and Enticement: How the Indian Media Lost Its Soul to the BJP." *Harvard Kennedy*. 30.

The research design for this paper employed the use of two key causal mechanisms: Public Opinion and the Indian Media. Employing the use of shifting tendencies of the public opinion in India and the one-sided, BJP-backed nature of the Indian media can explain how the rise of Hindu nationalism in India can potentially result in India's unloading of its nuclear weapons on Pakistan. The use of these causal mechanisms is instrumental in figuring out the circumstances that would need to be around for India to potentially activate its nuclear arsenal onto Pakistan. These mechanisms also allow for the research to analyze how Hindu nationalism and the BJP's influence are changing the way India is as a member of the international community.

Kashmir:

India and Pakistan have gone to war four times since gaining independence from the British and each time a war has been initiated, Kashmir has served as a reason for the conflict. The Kashmiri dispute started when the British departed the Indian subcontinent, and the region of Jammu and Kashmir was meant to decide which state it belonged to. Before acceding to India, Jammu and Kashmir had a Hindu Monarch, Maharaja Hari Singh, who ruled over a Muslim-majority. Maharaja Singh's decision to align with India in 1947 resulted in the signing of the Letter of Instrument of Accession to India.¹² This controversial decision made Kashmir a part of India but allowed Kashmir to have limited autonomy and self-governing – giving away for the people of Kashmir to govern themselves in some form. This decision has consistently upset the Pakistani government, which also believes that Kashmir belongs to Pakistan since it does have a Muslim majority. The signing of the Instrument of Accession paved the way for the conflict to arise in the most militarized region in the entire world.

12 Sehgal, Rashmi, Kashmir Conflict: Solutions and Demand for Self-Determination (2011). International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol. 1, No. 6; June 2011.

India and Pakistan have fought over who legitimately claims full control over Kashmir and that has resulted in the only time two states when nuclear powers have ever engaged in war. The long-standing dispute in Kashmir has caused mass casualties of civilians, human rights violations, and overall fear for the worst by both India and Pakistan. The dispute has intensified within the last decade due to the emergence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party, the BJP. Ever since becoming the Prime Minister of India in 2014, Modi has been on an agenda to further his Hindu nationalist views.¹³ This has had a massive negative impact on the people living in the disputed region of Kashmir and has further tarnished the relationship India shares with its adversary, Pakistan.

In August of 2019, Prime Minister Modi, with the support of his Hindu nationalist party, decided to revoke Article 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution, which caused an uproar in the Kashmir region. The revocation of these articles removed the limited autonomy Kashmir was granted in the Letter of Instrument of Accession to India. The Indian Penal Code along with 106 federal laws now apply to Kashmiri citizens that did not before.¹⁴ The revocation of Article 35A allows for any Indian to own land in the region, regardless of their status as a Kashmiri citizenship. This agenda has been pushed by the BJP since it allows where economic growth via tourism, but also helps the extensive Hindu population from other parts of India to infiltrate the only Muslim majority part of India. The decision to revoke these monumental laws has been detrimental to India's relationship with its nuclear-equipped neighbor. Pakistan claims that India has violated the U.N. Security Council Resolutions on Kashmir along with regional agreements,

13 Lauren Frayer and Furkan Latif Khan, "The Powerful Group Shaping The Rise Of Hindu Nationalism In India," NPR (NPR, May 3, 2019), <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/03/706808616/the-powerful-group-shaping-the-rise-of-hindu-nationalism-in-india>.

14 Devjyot Ghoshal, "Explainer: India's Kashmir Region Set to Lose Autonomy, Divided," Reuters (Thomson Reuters, October 30, 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-kashmir-restructuring-explainer/explainer-indias-kashmir-region-set-to-lose-autonomy-divided-idUSKBN1X9175>.

such as the Lahore Declaration and the 1972 Shimla Agreement.¹⁵ The response to this news from Pakistan's Director-General of Inter-Services Public Relations, Major General Asif Ghafoor has been to "fully support the [Pakistani] government's rejection of Indian actions regarding Kashmir [and] is prepared and shall go to any extent of [fulfilling] our obligations [to the Kashmiri people]." ¹⁶ Statements and threats such as the one given by Major General Asif Ghafoor bring up the fear of nuclear weapons being utilized by any one of these states.

The Public Opinion of the Indian Population:

Public opinions have been used as a means for inciting change for centuries. The world that we reside in is built on what people believe is the best for them. The same applies to using public opinion in politics. India's nuclear proliferation journey can be one of the examples that showcase the way public opinion can be used to implement changes to the system. Before Indira Gandhi becoming the Prime Minister of India, the elites within the Indian community fought over if India should develop its nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri found the development of nuclear weapons to be entirely too expensive — \$42-84 million.¹⁷ The development of the Indian nuclear arsenal came during the reign of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. While suffering from incredibly low domestic approval ratings due to an economic recession and massive riots, Gandhi found that developing and testing India's nuclear weapons could serve as just the ingredient to increase her public approval ratings. The domestic results of her initiative to rapidly develop and successfully detonate a nuclear weapon were extremely successful. Gandhi's approval ratings skyrocketed, "with Indian public opinion polls taken in June 1974 [reporting] that a full 91 percent of the adult literate population knew about the

15 Ibid.

16 Dawn.com, "Prepared to Go to Any Extent to Fulfil Our Obligations to Kashmiri People: ISPR," DAWN.COM, August 7, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1498420/prepared-to-go-to-any-extent-to-fulfill-our-obligations-to-kashmiri-people-ispr>.

17 Sagan, Scott D. "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb." *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1996): 67.

explosion and 90 percent of those individuals answered in the affirmative when asked if they were personally ‘proud of this achievement.’”¹⁸ With low approval ratings diminishing the light of the first female Prime Minister of the largest democracy in the world, Gandhi’s utilization of public opinion in her favor frames the way the BJP has also used this tactic to further their Hindu nationalist agenda to the Indian public.

Examining the population set of India serves as the first step in explaining the ways public opinions can be a significant factor in India’s dispute with Pakistan. Since the partition that occurred in 1947, India has identified itself as a secular state that prides itself in allowing its citizens to practice their religions freely. The make of the Indian population is quite diverse as well. The religious composition of India in 201 is as follows: Hindus- 79.8%, Muslims- 14.2%, Christian- 2.3%, and Sikhs- 1.7%.¹⁹ With the second largest population set in the entire world, India is densely populated, but the Hindu population is consistently ruling over the other religious minorities within the country. The literacy rate in a state with over 50% of the population being below the age of 35, is significant to examine.²⁰ With around 31.3% of India’s massive, 1.2 billion people population living in urban areas, it is becoming increasingly evident that less than a third of the population has a high literacy rate.²¹ With more than two-thirds of the population living in rural parts of India, the public opinion of the literate one-third is largely the determinant for India’s public opinion polls.

18 Ibid, 68.

19 BS Reporter, “India’s Population at 1.21 Billion; Hindus 79.8%, Muslims 14.2%,” Business Standard (Business-Standard, August 25, 2015), https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-s-population-at-1-21-billion-hindus-79-8-muslims-14-2-115082600038_1.html.

20 Anuja Asit Ranjan Mishra, “Census Profiles the Young Indian Voter, Spender,” mint, September 6, 2013, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/B1tnK7YhZZUYb56bLJL9kK/Census-profiles-the-young-Indian-voter-spender.html>.

21 Ibid.

With the data from India's population set, it can be determined that the public opinion one-third of Indian citizens have given nuclear weapons the green light. Reverting to Prime Minister Gandhi's time, Over 90% of the Indian population encouraged the development of nuclear weapons since it made them feel proud to be a part of a progressive nation.²² This similar tactic has been employed by the BJP when it comes to dealing with their neighboring adversary, Pakistan. Since Prime Minister Modi has entered office, he has blamed much of the issues surrounding India on the Muslim population in India along with Pakistan. The Hindutva — “Hindu-ness and the idea that India should be a ‘Hindu nation’”²³ is regularly terrifying. The minority population in India. With the rise of this movement and the implementation of the Hindutva Practices into the Indian political sphere, the public opinion on Pakistan and Muslims living within India is becoming increasingly hostile. With the recent banning of cow slaughter, two demolishing of 16th-century mosques, the hostility towards the Muslim population can be thoroughly felt throughout India.²⁴

The saffronisation of India has also resulted in changes in India's nuclear use policy. What started as a No-First-Use (NFU) policy has essentially transformed into a circumstance-based policy.²⁵ According to Clary and Narang, India's nuclear policy toward China has remained stagnant, but its NFU policy towards Pakistan “may be developing options [...] That would permit [India] to engage in hard nuclear counterforce targeting.”²⁶ This approach is new and threatens the use of nuclear power usage by India to potentially attack Pakistan. These

22 Sagan, Scott D. "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb." *International Security* 21, no. 3 (1996): 68.

23 Frayer, Lauren, and Furkan Latif Khan. "The Powerful Group Shaping The Rise Of Hindu Nationalism In India." NPR. NPR, May 3, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/03/706808616/the-powerful-group-shaping-the-rise-of-hindu-nationalism-in-india>.

24 Bhatia, Aditi. "The 'Saffronisation' of India and Contemporary Political Ideology." *World Englishes* 39, no. 4 (2020): 570.

25 Christopher Clary and Vipin Narang, "India's Counterforce Temptations: Strategic Dilemmas, Doctrine, and Capabilities," *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Winter 2018/19), pp. 7.

26 *Ibid.* 8.

dangerous opinions can also be seen further by the likes of India's former National Security Advisor, Shivshankar Menon, Defense Minister Monahar Parrikar, and retired Lieutenant General Nagal.²⁷ These three highly influential men have continued to claim that India should rethink its nuclear policies when it comes to dealing with Pakistan. And then interview, Defense Minister Monahar Parrikar stated, “A lot of people say India has a no-first-use nuclear policy, but why should I bind myself? I should say I am a responsible Nuclear power, and I will not use it irresponsibly.”²⁸ This statement from such an important figure in Indian politics seems a bit jarring since it excuses India from justifying its behavior when it comes to the use of nuclear weapons because no policy is technically in place. The declarations and interviews given by these important figures show how deep Hindu nationalism has become embedded within Indian politics and how pushing this transformative agenda onto India's nuclear policies can yet again influence the public opinion, allowing for India to use its nuclear arsenal towards Pakistan with full support from its population.

The Bharatiya Janata Party’s Use of the Indian Media:

Since winning the election in 2014, Prime Minister Modi along with his party the BJP, the freedom of the Indian media has suffered greatly. The transformation of the Indian media into a propaganda machine for the BJP and Prime Minister Modi has been a difficult journey to view. Before the 2014 election, the Indian media was still reputable and did not have a Prime Minister in place with the label “godji Modi” (lapdog Modi) attached to him by the Indian media. Mr. Modi's agenda with the Indian media has been simple: Take responsibility away from India and attack Pakistan. This strategy has been working effectively since the majority of the news channels in India only showcase what the BJP would like. An influential news network in India,

²⁷ Ibid. 20.

²⁸ Ibid.

NDTV, has suffered from the attacks of going against Prime Minister Modi. In an article by the New York Times, the author states that “when Mr. Modi became Prime Minister, his administration began a full-scale assault on NDTV.”²⁹ This assault was a result of NDTV's reporting of Mr. Modi's time as the Chief Minister of the State of Gujarat, where reporters of the network very bravely claimed Mr. Modi had “stood by while hundreds of Muslims were being massacred.”³⁰ This attack on The freedoms that the news media should have is unconstitutional and has resulted in India's world Freedom Press ranking declining rapidly.³¹ This is especially shameful since India is the largest democracy in the world, which prides itself on being free while having no integrity attached to the meaning of freedom itself.

The Indian media has become especially toxic with their treatment of Pakistan. In a YouTube video posted by the Indian News channel, Zee News, the BJP's anti-Pakistan rhetoric is evident through and through. The video features the narrator beginning the segment by Claiming in Hindi that, “Whenever there has been a war between India and Pakistan, Pakistan has always been defeated.”³² This segment continues with the host showing a series of graphics of India's nuclear missiles and which cities they could destroy in Pakistan if a nuclear war were to occur.³³ This type of hateful display on a widely viewed news channel can influence the opinion of people, who were already given harmful information on Pakistan by their elected officials. The Indian media plays an incredibly large hand when it comes to being a mechanism that could enable India to attack Pakistan if given enough domestic support. Not only does the Indian media

29 Vinu Goel, Jeffrey Gettleman, and Saumya Khandelwal, “Under Modi, India's Press Is Not So Free Anymore,” The New York Times (The New York Times, April 2, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/02/world/asia/modi-india-press-media.html>.

30 Ibid.

31 Ishfaq, Sarmad. 2020. “Coercion and Enticement: How the Indian Media Lost Its Soul to the BJP.” Harvard Kennedy School Review 20 (January): 30.

32 Option to Use Nuclear Weapons Always Available, Threatens Pak's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, YouTube (YouTube, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ia02BVXaIX4&list=LL&index=4>.

33 Ibid.

have to be the propaganda machine for the BJP, but it also has become instrumental in spreading BJP's Hindu nationalist agenda to the vulnerable mind of the regular Indian citizen. The result of this continued negative rhetoric can have extremely catastrophic effects on the Indians of the continent.

Broader Implications:

In the interconnected global community that we reside in, everyone's actions are constantly being echoed. The news spreads fast and wide all over the globe and incites a reaction from all over. The implications regarding the potential utilization of nuclear weapons as a result of nationalism are going to catch the eye of the international community instantaneously. Since the Indo-Pakistani relationship is already considered one that is highly volatile, the news of its escalation would be heard around the world in mere seconds. The implications of nuclear weapons potentially being used by India towards Pakistan can be divided up into three different sections: Economic, Geographical, and International.

Economic Implications:

If India were to unload its massive nuclear arsenal onto Pakistan, the state would suffer massive economic sanctions from the international community. India and Pakistan are no strangers to economic sanctions being placed upon them by the United States. In 1998, when both India and Pakistan announced the testing of their nuclear weapons, President Bill Clinton of the United States condemned their behavior and placed economic sanctions upon both these states.³⁴ If the use of any nuclear weapons by one of these states were to occur in real-time, the economic sanctions could be extremely harmful to both of these states' economies. It would also result in being shunned by the international community via the cancellation of trade deals and

34 Schuette, Sarah P. 2001. "U.S. Economic Sanctions Regarding the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: A Call for Reform of the Arms Export Control Act Sanctions." *Cornell International Law Journal* 35 (1): 240.

removal from many influential international organizations that allow for immense economic growth.

Geographical Implications:

Examining the implications of potential nuclear weapon usage from solely a geographical standpoint, the results of this action could be catastrophic. Since testing its first nuclear weapon in 1974, India has multiplied its nuclear arsenal tenfold. India has designed its ground-based nuclear programs to directly target Pakistan. Missiles such as Agni-II and Agni-III have “range is greater than 2,000-3,500 and 3,000-5,000 km, respectively.”³⁵ These ranges are within the sphere of major Pakistani cities such as, Islamabad and Lahore, which contain massive pockets of the Muslim population. The nuclear capabilities of India are extensive and if the time came for our nuclear weapon to be used, India and its nuclear arsenal have the potential of completely wiping out the state of Pakistan. This would cause millions of deaths in one of the largest population pockets in the entire world. India has nuclear capabilities on air, sea, and land, which also easily allow access to other major Pakistani cities that can cause massive destruction of lives and infrastructure if these nuclear weapons were activated.

International Implications:

The international implications of a potential nuclear attack by India to Pakistan could change the way the world might go to war, the rise of ideologies contributing to conflict can be extremely detrimental. The rise of nationalism as a means to justify an attack on a neighboring state can create a very scary and terrifying world to reside in. If the rise of Hindu nationalism could cause a nuclear weapon to be used, the possibilities for what other states could justify using their nuclear Arsenal on could be limitless. The rise in religious and nationalistic

³⁵ “Fact Sheet: India's Nuclear Inventory,” Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, March 25, 2021, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/indias-nuclear-capabilities/>.

ideologies could pave the way for states around the world to start their nuclear proliferation journey. States who are unable to obtain the formula to become equipped when nuclear weapons would suffer tremendously at the hands of those, they might share difficult relationships with their adversaries. This thought makes the future seem bleak and dark, thus why preventative measures must be in place to avoid situations such as this from ever occurring.

The implications that surround the potential usage of nuclear weapons by India towards Pakistan are viable and can cause a plethora of changes to the way the international community operates. To prevent the future of the world from seeming so bleak, India must understand the severity of its actions and the implications that surround its need to potentially using its nuclear weapons towards Pakistan.

Conclusion:

The India and Pakistan relationship has been rocky since that time these two states became independent entities. The conflict of both of these states has become one to watch over the years due to its consistent negative trajectory along with the nuclear capabilities of both India and Pakistan. The rise of Hindu nationalism in India has further complicated the situation since it has allowed for this religious ideology to become attached to one of the major parties in the Indian political realm. The Bharatiya Janata Party and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindutva motivated lawmaking has deeply disturbed the Muslim population within India and the Pakistani government. The changing nature of India's nuclear weapon policy by its Hindu nationalist politicians and military generals has led me to conclude that if the circumstances allowed, India would indeed use nuclear weapons to attack Pakistan. The causal mechanisms in place that would allow a circumstance such as this one to occur would deal with the changes in the Indian public opinion along with the Hindu nationalist tendencies of the Indian media, which is entirely

backed by the BJP. The rise and effects of Hindu nationalism in India are dangerous and must be closely examined to prevent a global nuclear catastrophe from occurring.

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